Next, a description will be given in detail of the operation of each of the constituent elements illustrated in Fig. 4.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 36, line 1 with the following rewritten paragraph:

As is obvious from the above description, although the video picture having an improved coding efficiency is limited in the conventional coding by the fixed picture structure, since the coding is selected depending on the picture structure according to the feature or variation of the input video picture according to the present invention, a high coding efficiency can be maintained even if a video picture having any feature is input or the feature of the video picture is varied on the way.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Cancel claims 1, 4 and 6.

3. (Amended) A video coding apparatus for coding a video picture by the use of motion compensatory prediction of each of video pictures with respect to sequentially input video signals, the video coding apparatus comprising:

inter-frame variance calculation means for calculating a variance between timewise adjacent input video signals with respect to the input video signals;

intra-frame coding mode decision means for deciding an intra-frame coding mode based on the variance without using any motion compensatory prediction; and

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one-way coding (P) frame interval decision means for deciding a P frame interval for carrying

out motion compensatory prediction coding based on the features of the input video pictures,

a GOP boundary position being decided based on the decision by the intra-frame coding

mode decision means, and the P frame interval inside a GOP being decided based on the decision

by the P frame interval decision means.